

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 /094 W
-----035243 181738Z /47

P R 181645Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2185
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRETORIA 4846

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: AHTISAARI SEES LONG WAY AHEAD; MORE HAND
SIGNS

REF: PRETORIA 4762

1. PRESS REPORTS AUGUST 18 STATE THAT UPON BEING ASKED WHAT HE REGARDED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF HIS TRIP TO THE BORDER AREAS, UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AHTISAARI REPLIED, "BASICALLY I REALIZE THAT I THINK WE HAVE A LONG WAY AHEAD BEFORE WE CAN CREATE THE ATMOSPHERE THAT WOULD GUARANTEE A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION IN THE TERRITORY." AT THE SAME TIME, IN GROONFONTEIN, JUSTICE STEYN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THERE WAS NO
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POSSIBILITY OF POSTPONING THE DECEMBER 31 TARGET DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE.

2. AHTISAARI REFERRED TO PRESS REPORTS OF HIS ALLEGED SWAPO SALUTE AS "THE UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT ABOUT BY OWN BEHAVIOUR." HE REPORTEDLY USED THE EXAMPLE OF THE SABC REPORT TO URGE ON HIS AUDIENCE THE IMPORTANCE OF "RESPONSIBILITY" AND "UNBIASED"

BEHAVIOR BY BOTH PARTICIPANTS IN THE MISSION AND INFORMATION SERVICES. JAPIE BASSON, PROGRESSIVE FEDERAL PARTY (PFL) FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN, WAS REPORTED IN THE RAND DAILY MAIL TO HAVE DESCRIBED P.M. VORSTER'S REACTION TO THE ERRONEOUS SALUTE REPORT (SEE REFTEL) AS THAT OF A MAN "SEEKING A CASUS BELLI." SABC HAS NOW OFFICIALLY CORRECTED THE ERRONEOUS REPORTS.

3. ATTENTION HAS THEREFORE SHIFTED TO JUSTICE STEYN'S HANDS. WINDHOEK REPORTS YESTERDAY HAD NEWSMEN CLAIMING TO HAVE SEEN STEYN GIVE THE DTA V-SIGNAL WHILE PASSING A GROUP OF DTA SUPPORTERS ON THE DAY OF AHTISAARI'S ARRIVAL. STEYN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO TRUTH IN THOSE ALLEGATIONS."

4. COMMENT: AHTISAARI'S STATEMENT THAT A LONG WAY LIES AHEAD BEFORE ELECTIONS IS SEEN BY SOME OBSERVERS AS A FIRST, SUBTLE STEP IN WINNING A SOMETIMES WAVERING STEYN TO THE VIEW THAT DECEMBER 31 IS NOW AN UNREALISTIC GOAL FOR INDEPENDENCE AND ELECTIONS.
EDMONDSON

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